

**Cabinet**  
**Minutes of the Virtual Teams Meeting held on**  
**Monday 8 March 2021 at 10am**

**Present:**

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

**Executive Directors Present:**

James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services and Head of Paid Service.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Cabinet meeting and advised viewers that pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was being held under new Regulations which had been brought in to deal with the restrictions under Covid 19. Decisions made in the meeting would have the same standing and validity as if they had been made in a meeting in County Hall.

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 1 February 2021.**

Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1 February 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

The Chairman, Cllr Andrew Proctor declared an interest in agenda item 17 (Repton Property Developments Ltd Business Plan 2021-22) as he was a Council appointed Director of Repton Property Developments Ltd.

Cllr Greg Peck declared an interest relating to item 17 (Repton Property Developments Ltd Business Plan 2021-22) and item 18 (Hethel Innovation Ltd Business Plan and Proposed Expansion) as he was a Director of Repton Property Developments Ltd and a Director of Hethel Innovation Ltd.

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

There were no matters referred to Cabinet.

#### **5 Items of Urgent Business**

5.1 There were no items of urgent business.

#### **6 Public Question Time**

6.1 The list of public questions and responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

##### **6.2 Supplementary question from Paul Neale:**

Mr Neale stated that the information about recycling on the website was still unavailable which indicated no waste was being recycled from kerbside bins. As a supplementary question, Mr Neale asked whether the County Council was treating other plastics, such as rigid plastics, as the Environmental Policy dated November 2019 stated that the County Council was striving to meet the global challenge by working towards carbon neutrality by 2030 and if not, where was the waste going.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste agreed to provide specific information about rigid plastics which were being sent to waste from energy plants and recycled for energy, as there was currently no outlet for them to be recycled in Norfolk.

##### **6.3 Supplementary question from Richard Hawker**

As a supplementary question Mr Hawker asked for reassurance that the £1.024m from the Department for Transport had been capitalised following their guidance and that the conditions of the grant were being met.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport agreed to provide a written response to the question.

6.4 The members of the public who were unable to join the meeting due to technical problems would receive a written response to their supplementary question. (Appendix C).

#### **7 Local Member Questions/Issues**

7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached at Appendix B.

**7.2 Supplementary question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp**

As a supplementary question, Cllr Kemp asked if the application would be amended to inform the government of the 80% increase in accidents around King's Lynn and that the West Winch bypass should be built before the 350 houses.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport replied he fully supported the report and application as it stood.

7.5 The written supplementary questions submitted were responded to in writing (Appendix C).

**8 Highway Parish Partnership Schemes 2021-22**

8.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the proposed parish partnership programme for 2021-22.

8.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- 2021-22 would see approximately 113 small local schemes, delivering projects requested by local communities, including trods; village gateways; bus shelters and vehicle activated signs.
- The way the programme was funded, with town and parish council contributions, meant that the funding available would double.
- The contribution for 2021-22 was £313,626, with a Safety Camera partnership contribution of just over £39k to the local investment programme which would support the delivery of schemes totalling £715,489.
- Although the Parish Partnership Scheme was not available in urban areas that did not have parish or town councils, communities had not been forgotten and significant investment had been made in urban areas including investment in Norwich as part of the Transforming Cities Fund; the 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing construction in Great Yarmouth and the West Winch Housing Access Road.

8.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the proposals, particularly regarding the villages of Burnham Thorpe, North Creake and Burnham Market where gateways would be installed to help control speeding in those villages and he thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport for facilitating the schemes.

8.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention endorsed the scheme and the contributions made by the Safety Camera Partnership, highlighting in particular the schemes in Lyng; North Tuddenham and Swanton Morley which had utilised the funding to reduce speed through rural villages. Traffic speeding through villages was an issue which was raised regularly at parish council meetings and the Parish Partnership Scheme was recognised as an effective way of providing money for projects that would benefit local communities.

- 8.5 The Cabinet Member for Transformation, Innovation & Performance also endorsed the report, highlighting concerns in rural villages and towns with narrow roads about speeding and that anything that slowed vehicles down and made it safer for pedestrians and other road users should be welcomed.
- 8.6 The Chairman reiterated the comments made which showed how valued the scheme was across the county. The proposed schemes were widespread and worked by providing the facilities communities requested. It showed a true partnership approach.
- 8.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Approve** the 90 local schemes listed in Appendix B of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2021/22.
  2. **Approve** the 23 vehicle activated sign schemes listed in Appendix C of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2021/22, subject to securing funding from the Safety Camera Partnership.

## 8.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

This Parish Partnership scheme enables delivery of schemes which have been identified as important by local communities.

The contribution from Town and Parish Council's and the Safety Camera Partnership means that we can deliver more schemes on the ground. In addition, where local communities support lower cost solutions, there is a positive impact on the wider highway's improvement programme. For example, over the last five years, the implementation of trods has enabled 32 much more expensive footway schemes to be removed from the forward programme.

## 8.9 **Alternative Options**

Cabinet could decide to reduce the County Council's contribution to the Parish Partnership Programme or could decide to not utilise unallocated highways funding to allow all the assessed bids to progress. In which case, a set of additional criteria would need to be developed to enable the current list of proposed schemes for 2021/22 to be re-assessed.

## 9 **Highways Capital programme 2021/22/23/24 and Transport Asset Management Plan.**

- 9.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services.
- 9.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted that the report summarised the one-year settlement following the Government's November 2020 budget and the proposed allocations for 2021/22. The report also included the successful progression of the 3rd River Crossing in Great Yarmouth, the Transforming Cities Fund in the Greater Norwich Area and the Long Stratton Bypass.

The Cabinet Member also highlighted that competitive bids had recently secured significant funding from the Local Growth Fund via the New Anglia Local

Enterprise Partnership as well as the Department for Transport National Productivity Investment Fund for improvements and the Department for Transport Challenge and Incentive Funds for maintenance as well as Active Travel Fund for walking and cycling.

Cabinet noted the recommended allocations for 2021-22 based on the expected Government settlement were set out in paragraphs 1.10; 1.11 and Appendix A of the report.

- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy supported the proposals, noting how encouraging it was to see the investment in the highways in Norfolk, as well as the Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing which had received a £98m grant to commence the work.

The Cabinet Member drew attention to the National Highways and Transport public satisfaction survey 2020 which highlighted that Norfolk County Council had achieved an overall score of 56 and was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of 29 councils which had participated in the survey. Norfolk had also received second place in the best performing authorities in the eastern group which was testament to the work carried out to provide the right infrastructure to make Norfolk a safe place and help the economy.

- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance endorsed the report highlighting that during the pandemic new ways of working had been achieved, whilst recognising that decent infrastructure was required to ensure people needing to move around the county could do so safely and effectively, particularly when moving manufactured goods into and out of Norfolk as part of the economy.

- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport for the proposals and highlighted the profile of walking and cycling and active travel, had been significantly raised. The Cabinet Member for Finance noted the £1.5m received from the Active Travel Fund, tranche 2. Although the terms of the bid for that tranche meant that the proposals were for urban areas rather than rural areas, it was hoped more rural projects would be included in the next tranche. The Cabinet Member highlighted the funding for over 300 walking routes and 50 cycling proposals and thanked the Cabinet Member for including those.

- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention congratulated the team on achieving the funding from central government for Norfolk.

- 9.7 The Chairman endorsed the comments made about the work of the team in bringing money into Norfolk and reflected on the budget proposals agreed at Council on 19 February highlighting the size of the investment in Norfolk. The Chairman also highlighted how the project supported the Council's "Together for Norfolk" objective.

- 9.8 The Cabinet Member for Finance also highlighted the initiative in the west of Norfolk to carry out work to improve the Pullover Roundabout junction between the A17 and A148 which was welcomed.

9.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Approve** the Highways Capital programme including the proposed draft allocations and programme for 2021/22 and indicative allocations for 2022/23/24 (as set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report).
2. **Approve** the temporary maintenance and deck fixing proposal for Carrow Bridge as set out in paragraph 2.2.7 of the report
3. **Approve** the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

9.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision:**

Refer to section 5 of the report.

9.11 **Alternative Options**

Differing proposals could be put forward to utilise planned invest differently across the highway assets or provide additional investment from our Council. However, given the strong performance above in 5.2, this is not recommended.

**10 Great Yarmouth Operations and Maintenance Campus.**

- 10.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services which followed on from the recommendations made by Cabinet in April 2020 to provide detailed costings and anticipated timescales for phase 1 of the project.
- 10.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services highlighted that the project was very exciting and had been made possible by the close working relationship with colleagues from Norfolk County Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 10.3 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy introduced the report and moved the recommendations during which the following points were noted:
- The offshore energy sector provided Great Yarmouth and Norfolk with the single most important opportunity for regeneration.
  - Oil and Gas had been the mainstay of the economy for over 50 years and the recent emergence of offshore renewable energy had presented the Great Yarmouth port with an opportunity for growth and investment.
  - The Local Industrial Strategy identified the sector as one of the three most important for Norfolk and Suffolk with the Strategy focused on ensuring necessary steps were being taken to work with Partners to create ideal conditions to attract and maintain the investment to optimise the assets.
  - The report sets out a proposal to establish an operations and maintenance base at Great Yarmouth, a bold initiative which had received positive feedback from the industry.
  - The report followed recommendations agreed by Cabinet in April 2020 to provide detailed costings and timescales for phase 1 of the Project. Further work would be undertaken to obtain a better understanding of the costs of the project.

- Since 2020 Norfolk County Council had been successful in securing £6m from the Government Getting Building Fund and a further £1m from Norfolk Business Rates Pool towards project costs.
- The forecast retained business rates income for the Enterprise Zone would help meet project costs initially borrowed by Norfolk County Council and then repaid.
- In addition, a proposal was included to agree to co-investment with Great Yarmouth Borough Council up to £1m each as a commercial investment to meet the funding gap.
- Research had shown that the Operations and Maintenance Campus would provide Great Yarmouth with an asset which would enable the area to rival other parts of the UK and accelerate the growth being seen in the energy sector.
- The project had emerged through strong partnership working and would not have been conceived and developed without the support of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Peel Ports working together with Norfolk County Council.
- The Great Yarmouth Operations & Maintenance Campus would be the catalyst for job creation and supply chain growth, with ambitious plans for economic recovery in the next few months, helping to transform Great Yarmouth into a vibrant coastal economy.
- The net cost to the public sector would be reduced due to the receipt of additional rates income from new development at the enterprise zone.
- It was estimated approximately 650 new jobs could be created at the site.

- 10.4 The Chairman highlighted that this was a great opportunity and one which could not happen without public sector involvement and the strength of partnership working to get this far and to deliver the project.
- 10.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the proposals for the operations and maintenance campus which would help enterprise to flourish across the county. The Cabinet Member reiterated the work of the County and Borough Council officers, together with the Local Enterprise Partnership to produce the business plan which made the most of the strategic opportunities whilst ensuring the security of the County Council's financial position. Cabinet noted that the County Council was contributing an initial £1m and forward funding a further £9m amounting to approximately 50% of the project costs which would be received back from Pot B in the future.
- 10.6 The Chairman advised Cabinet that the LEP Board had agreed at its recent meeting to amend the Pot B alignment, and together with the £6m from the Getting Building Fund from the government there was a large amount of public money being invested to support the project.
- 10.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Agree** for Norfolk County Council to deliver the Great Yarmouth Operations and Maintenance Campus project
  2. **Delegate** authority to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to agree the Heads of Terms for Norfolk County Council's £1m investment and the financial risk sharing arrangements for the project (Note that provision for the £1m investment has already been included in the 2021-22 Capital Programme).

3. **Recommend to County Council** that a further £17m is added to the Capital Programme for this project with £9m of this being funded by prudential borrowing.
4. **Note** that the County Council's £9m prudential borrowing will be formalised through a MoU agreement with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and New Anglia LEP with the expectation that this borrowing will be fully repaid from the Great Yarmouth Enterprise Zone Pot B business rates funding.
5. **Agree** the delegation to the Executive Director Community and Environment Services of the procurement in accordance with the requirements of the County Council's Contract Standing Orders a contractor to carry out the infrastructure works.

#### 10.8 **Evidence and reasons for Decision**

Refer to paragraph 4 of the report.

#### 10.9 **Alternative Options**

Refer to paragraph 5 of the report.

### 11 **West Winch Housing Access Road**

- 11.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services which described the work that had been carried out in partnership between the Borough and County Councils since late 2017 to develop a scheme using WSP to carry out technical work and sought Cabinet agreement to the submission of the Strategic Outline Business Case.
- 11.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services highlighted that this infrastructure project was significant and would hopefully be supported by local residents. The Executive Director highlighted the close working with colleagues at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to achieve the work they had to date.
- 11.3 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted that the provision of the West Winch Housing access road was essential to enable approximately 4000 new homes to be developed in the West Winch area of King's Lynn. The road would also provide an alternative route which would bypass the village of West Winch which suffered from the impact of heavy through-traffic.

Officers at Norfolk County Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk had worked in partnership, and would continue to work in partnership, to develop and promote the road to realise the shared growth aspirations set out in the adopted local plan.

A strategic outline business case had been prepared to bid for funding from the Department of Transport Major Road Network Fund, which, if Cabinet agreed, would be submitted at the earliest opportunity. A copy of the business case was attached at Appendix A of the report.

The total cost of the scheme was approximately £64.73m and the bid was for approximately £50m from the government, with the required local contribution



being achieved from developers as set out in the Borough Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 11.4 The Chairman highlighted that this was another important project in terms of infrastructure in Norfolk.
- 11.5 In supporting the proposals, the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy highlighted a few of the economic benefits of building the road:
- Journey times and reliability on the A10 would be improved.
  - Transport costs for local businesses would be reduced.
  - Business connectivity and accessibility would be improved, contributing to a more balanced economy.
  - The new levelling up agenda would be helped.
  - New housing would expand the business labour pool and the available skills markets, creating a richer and more diverse workforce.
  - Inward investment into the region to enhance the county's global competitiveness would be supported.
  - To realise the economic potential of the growth opportunity in King's Lynn and West Norfolk it was fundamental that growth areas were connected to the wider road network.
- 11.6 The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed this was an extremely important project for the economy of West Norfolk and that the Strategic Outline Business Case should be sent to the Department for Transport as soon as possible.
- 11.7 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention supported the proposals which would benefit Norfolk and was an example of how Norfolk County Council was being proactive in looking at the issues and problems and finding ways to resolve them.
- 11.8 The Chairman thanked Cabinet Members for their comments which demonstrated the amount of work done in putting the proposals together and the success rate Norfolk received from submitting bids to Central Government.

Cabinet thanked the Community & Environmental Services team for their work in preparing these schemes to ensure they benefited Norfolk.

- 11.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Confirm** in principle support for the delivery of the West Winch Housing Access Road.
  2. **Agree** that the contents of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) document set out a strong Strategic Case for the scheme
  3. **Task** officers to submit the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport at the earliest opportunity.

11.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

To deliver the large scale growth in the West Winch area, as set out in the Local Plan for the King's Lynn and West Norfolk, the evidence shows that additional highway capacity is required to accommodate the traffic generated from the planned 4,000 new homes. The WWHAR will also provide a high quality new

route to MRN standards that will provide relief for West Winch village that can take the longer distance strategic traffic movements which comprises a high proportion of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV).

#### **11.11 Alternative Options**

The alignment of the WWHAR is largely dictated by the specification for the growth area as set out in the local plan and comprises a route to the east of the proposed new housing. With regard to alternative options, slight variations of the alignment to provide the best fit were investigated and these are reported in the SOBC document.

There are no significant alternative highway solutions that would be effective in enabling the housing growth and providing relief to the village of West Winch. There are also no non-highway transport schemes or policy options that could accommodate the transport impact of the planned growth in isolation.

### **12 Project Member Group Review by Local Partnerships**

12.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services providing a number of proposals intended to assist project delivery and governance by responding to issues identified during the review by Local Partnerships, an independent body owned by the Local Government Association and HM Treasury.

12.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted the background to the report, in that in December 2019, Cabinet had received feedback from the Scrutiny Committee relating to Broadland Northway - Lessons Learnt and One Year Monitoring. Cabinet had made a recommendation that set out how the Council would review Terms of Reference and the remit of Member Working Groups for the Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing and the Norwich Western Link projects.

The review had been completed by Local Partnerships, which was an independent body owned by the Local Government Association and HM Treasury and a copy of the report was attached at Appendix A of the report.

The report provided a number of proposals that were intended to assist project delivery and governance by responding to issues identified during the review.

The Local Partnerships review had concluded that a robust governance process was in place, which was well understood and used by officers and councillors. Member working groups had been introduced, which had proved effective and allowed councillors to keep up to date with the progress of projects and liaise with the relevant officers. The report had also found that the working groups and project board meetings were well attended and were effective in monitoring and supporting major projects.

The report had set out a range of findings which had been considered helpful and would improve and assist with future major highway and infrastructure project delivery.

12.3 The Chairman noted that the recommended process was straightforward and the report was a validation of the way projects had been developed as well as how they would be developed in the future.

12.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- **Note** the details and findings in the Local Partnerships report and to
- **agree** the proposals set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

#### 12.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Cabinet responded to the feedback from Scrutiny Committee and commissioned an independent review of the existing Working Groups involved in the delivery of the Great Yarmouth 3rd River Crossing and Norwich Western Link projects. The findings of the review by Local Partnerships are attached at Appendix A and these include a range of proposals for Cabinet to consider and agree.

The review undertaken by Local Partnerships has considered key documentation for each project and a range of interviews with key people involved in the delivery of the projects and Members involved in the Working Groups. Local Partnerships complete a range of 'gateway' reviews for major projects nationally and are well placed to provide feedback based on what they have seen and what they have heard from their interviews. Their proposals in terms of potential improvements are intended to provide the basis for improving the project delivery processes that the Council currently has, in particular how the Working Groups operate as part of that delivery.

#### 12.6 **Alternative Options**

The proposals could be noted, but not actioned. This would leave the existing arrangements (and Terms of Reference) unchanged.

A further review could be undertaken if the proposals (in paragraph 2.3 of the report) are not accepted.

### 13 **Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework update - 2021**

13.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the key updates to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) document, which when endorsed would be the third edition of the document. The NSPF document was going through a comparable endorsement procedure with all the Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk.

13.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services highlighted that the report was a result of the excellent working relationship between Norfolk County Council and District Council colleagues in having a framework to ensure safe and appropriate development across Norfolk.

13.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport introduced the report and moved the recommendations, noting that the report highlighted how Norfolk County Council had a duty to cooperate with local planning authorities on strategic planning matters and the Norfolk Strategy Planning Framework

would help to demonstrate the work done in the development of local plans, how the authorities had discharged their duty to cooperate and fulfilled the role of Statement of Common Ground.

The NSPF was not a policy document and did not include planning policies or proposals. The document was intended to set out areas of agreement between authorities on strategic planning issues.

The NSPF had been endorsed in March 2018 by the former Environment, Development and Transport Committee and had been updated and endorsed by Cabinet in September 2019. The document had been further reviewed and updated to demonstrate that cooperation between authorities was ongoing.

The Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum was responsible for overseeing the production of the NSPF and had recommended that the authority endorse the updated version when it met on 25 January 2021.

- 13.4 The Chairman highlighted that the report showed the strength of partnership working across Norfolk, with the duty to cooperate working well so far, it was hoped this would not be abolished in the future as had been mooted.
- 13.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted the report strengthened the work being done and the need to cooperate at all times between different bodies was well known and understood. The Cabinet Member for Finance also noted that Water Resources East was to revisit Anglian Water's Resource Management Plan in light of recent flooding, which was excellent news and he looked forward to seeing how the outstanding issues would be resolved.
- 13.6 In supporting the report and the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance highlighted that he was particularly pleased to see that local plans would be emphasising the need for supporting broadband which was really important in the emerging economy. He highlighted the recent audit carried out by BDUK on rurality broadband in Norfolk, which had highlighted Norfolk was one of the best counties in the country for accessing broadband in rural areas.
- 13.7 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy endorsed and supported the recommendations in the report and highlighted the following points:
- It was pleasing to see partners working together to ensure the Norfolk economy could grow.
  - There were significant geographic clusters of existing business activity that anchored the Norfolk economy, with nine key sectors identified in the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy, all of which were covered in the report:
    - Energy
    - Advanced agriculture, food and drink
    - Life sciences and biotech, including health
    - ICT tech and digital creativeness
    - Financial Services and insurance
    - Visitor economy, tourism and culture
    - Transport, freight and logistics
    - Construction and development

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering

13.8 The Chairman noted that the Framework demonstrated that planning was not only about building houses; there was a vast range of work included in the planning process.

13.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- **Endorse** the updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework as part of the County Council's ongoing "duty to co-operate".

#### 13.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The Framework has already been used successfully to support the development of Local Plans. It must be kept up to date to continue to fulfil this role. At this stage the NSPF has not taken into account the proposals set out in the Government's Planning White Paper (PWP), which were reported to Cabinet in October 2020, as these lack the necessary detail and legislative weight to be considered relevant at this time. However, members will recall that concerns were raised by Cabinet to the proposed abolition of the Duty Cooperate as set out in the PWP.

#### 13.11 **Alternative Options**

The County Council could withdraw its support for the Framework and come to separate agreements with each planning authority. This would likely be an inefficient process and may undermine the ability to demonstrate the County Council's commitment to support the delivery of planned economic and housing growth.

### 14 **Libraries supporting Covid recovery for children and young people.**

14.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services offering proposals from Norfolk Library and Information Service about how the service could respond to issues related to children and young people and reading that have been exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic.

14.2 Link below to the report by Ofsted: Children hardest hit by COVID-19 pandemic are regressing in basic skills and learning  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-children-hardest-hit-by-covid-19-pandemic-are-regressing-in-basic-skills-and-learning>

14.3 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services commended the work carried out by Jan Holden, Head of Libraries, and colleagues in the Library service to help young people, their parents and to help close the literacy and learning gap.

14.4 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnership highlighted the following key points:

- The library team had worked extremely hard during the pandemic to provide a range of different services from libraries.

- Ofsted had identified that children's reading stamina or ability had diminished during the lockdown periods and the library service wanted to remove any barriers to reading and increase opportunities for reading for pleasure to help contribute to children's wellbeing and also improve general reading ability. This initiative would, in turn, contribute to future educational success as well as future employment opportunities.
- Three recommendations were being proposed:
  - Universal membership of the e-book library for children under 16 years of age, including e-books, e-magazines and comics and e-audio books. This would help to ensure children from families that did not have transport or live close to libraries could access a wide range of books which could also assist with their homework. This would also support the Every Child Online initiative.
  - Removal of overdue charges from borrowed children's books. Although fines were only 5p per day, they could build up and removal of fines would prevent families from being put off using the libraries if they were on a low income or were unemployed.
  - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships proposed, seconded by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services that the charges for children's overdue books should be removed in perpetuity. Cabinet **agreed** the proposal.
  - The third proposal would build on the summer reading challenge and was aimed at very young children and their parents or carers. The Registration Service already offered free bookstart packs to all new parents, together with information about the importance of reading to babies. The new challenge was to read, or look at, 1000 books between birth and starting school, which would hopefully encourage parents and carers to get into the habit of reading to, and with, children so it became an enjoyable hobby. The number of books borrowed would be recorded, with certificates awarded at the 50 books borrowed stage, 100 books borrowed, etc. Those reading 1000 books before starting school would be awarded a prize as well as a certificate. Those not reaching 1000 books would also have benefited from reading which would also help their communication skills and readiness for school.

- 14.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services endorsed the initiative and seconded the proposal to remove the overdue charges in perpetuity. He highlighted how innovative the library service was and how it had become the hub of communities.
- 14.6 In supporting the proposals and recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy congratulated the Cabinet Member on the report which would improve the ability of children to read and improve their learning ability in the future.
- 14.7 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance also endorsed the congratulations to everyone concerned in producing the report, adding that Norfolk took libraries very seriously, which was not the case across the country. He added that the initiative would help children understand that libraries were important centres and not just a place which provided books; they also were places that provided information on health, business and access to information.

- 14.8 The Cabinet Member for Finance also endorsed the comments made about libraries being community hubs, which was a very positive approach. He highlighted that the cost of removing overdue charges was estimated at £52,000 which was minimal compared with the benefits of encouraging children into libraries and enjoy reading.
- 14.9 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention endorsed the report and recommendations and echoed the points made about Norfolk investing in libraries and fully supported the initiative in getting children to read. He also endorsed the removal of fines which would mean children and young people would not need to worry about returning overdue books and incurring fines.
- 14.10 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management also supported the proposal and the comments already made, adding that reading was the bedrock of all other learning and it was important to support children to improve their reading. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the investment being undertaken in libraries and congratulated the library team for bringing the proposals forward
- 14.11 The Chairman also highlighted the investment being made in libraries making them the centre of communities.
- 14.12 The Chairman advised Cabinet that Jan Holden, Head of Libraries, would be retiring from the County Council at the end of March 2021. Jan would be missed by everyone in the service and for the work she had put in whilst Head of Libraries and her commitment to Norfolk County Council. Cabinet placed on record its best wishes for the future and her retirement. The Executive Director of Community & Environment Services agreed to pass on Cabinet's best wishes.
- 14.13 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Agree** the children's e-lending proposal.
  2. **Agree** to remove children's overdue charges in perpetuity.
  3. **Agree** the 1000 books before school proposals.
- 14.14 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- UK libraries that have removed the fear of overdue charges for children and young people have reported:
- An increase in membership by children and young people
  - A re-setting of the relationship with children and young people by taking away barriers to library use
  - An increase in the return of overdue items to the library. As part of the implementation of the decision the service will be asking children to return their books to the library without fear of incurring any charges
  - A positive contribution to reading for pleasure in the county
- 14.15 **Alternative Options**
- Not applicable.

## **15 Accelerating the Development of Supported Housing**

- 15.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director Adult Social Services setting out a proposal and business case for accelerating the development of supported, adapted and specialist housing in Norfolk. The creation of supported, adapted and specialist housing across the county would provide many people with care and support needs with an alternative housing option that recognises their care needs and allows them to live in an independent and dignified way in their local communities.
- 15.2 The Executive Director of Adult Social Services expressed his pleasure in reaching the stage of developing housing options for disabled people and gave a commitment, if Cabinet agreed the report, to ensure that work was carried out in coproduction with disabled people in the design of the housing.
- 15.3 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention supported the Executive Director's commitment, adding that a policy of promoting independence at Norfolk County Council had been launched four years ago and which had been consistently followed through with projects to support it.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the report, if agreed, would allow people to remain in their own homes, or in residential places, which would give them a feeling of, and the opportunity to experience life as simply as everyone else, which was something service users had said they wanted. Work had been carried out with service users to try to ascertain options to offer a range of services for those that suffered from autism, learning disability as well as physical disabilities.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the financial commitment from the County Council of between £9m and £18m, depending on the take-up of the various projects, which represented the will of the County Council to fulfil its strategic objectives in giving people as much independence as possible.

- 15.4 The Chairman noted the proposed investment which demonstrated real leadership in recognising that the market would not build this type of housing and the public sector would need to provide the funding for housing and which may in turn leverage funding for other developments in the future.
- 15.5 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management fully supported the proposals, adding that the property team also fully supported the proposals which would improve the life chances of people with disabilities.
- 15.6 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance also endorsed the proposals which were important to offer people with disabilities a range of options to promote their independence and dignity.
- 15.7 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the proposals adding that the business case was well costed, clear, decisive and robust and was another initiative by Norfolk County Council to help people be as independent as possible during their lives.



- 15.8 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy also supported the proposals and asked if there should be a paragraph in the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework to include this type of housing in all developments in future.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention would follow up the suggestion.

- 15.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- a) **Set up a** housing programme to encourage and accelerate the delivery of supported, adapted and specialist housing in Norfolk:
  - i. On privately owned land, setting up a capital contribution process to support the development of supported, adapted and specialist housing in Norfolk in new builds or as adaptations to existing properties
  - ii. On publicly owned land, following the most appropriate process when bringing forward supported, adapted and specialist schemes. This may include the establishment of a developer/provider framework or individual procurement process depending on the source of the land and stakeholders involved
- b) **Fund** programme costs of £108k per annum
- c) **Agree** that NCC funds capital investment of between £9m and £18m over the life of the programme

- 15.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 4 of the report.

- 15.11 **Alternative Options**

An alternative approach would be not to undertake the housing programme and rely on the market delivering the required number of new accommodation units. Evidence and history indicate this will not be possible and NCC will fail to adequately house people now and in the future and fail to make reductions in revenue spend.

## 16 **Finance Monitoring Report 2020-21 P10: January 2021**

- 16.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services providing a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2020-21 Revenue and capital Budgets, General balances and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2021, together with related financial information.

- 16.2 Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and moved the recommendations during which the following points were noted:

- A small underspend of £21,000 continued to be forecast for 2020-21.
- At the Council meeting on 22 February 2021, it was agreed that spending departments would hold a departmental reserve and that a centrally held reserve would be created to respond to any specific pandemic related pressures. The details of the reserves were set out in Table 3 of the report and included an additional £2m to be transferred into the Adult Social Care covid-risk reserve if agreed by Cabinet, bringing the total to £12.36m.

- Children's Services covid risk reserve remained at £3m.
- Community & Environmental Services covid risk reserve was £1.681m.
- Recommendation 2 asked Cabinet to approve the continuation of measures put in place in October 2020, including:
  - Payments to home support providers;
  - Payments to short break providers;
  - Payments to residential and nursing providers;
  - Additional 6% provider support payments;
  - Other market support measures would continue until at least the end of June 2021, after which they would be reviewed based on where the country stood on the way out of the pandemic.
- The significant pressures building up within Adult Social Care and Children's Services had been well documented, but Children's Services had already identified direct one-off increases in covid-related costs, eg increased support to schools and education providers as schools reopened; home to school transport and general market pressure within social care.
- Apart from the previously mentioned additional £2m to covid departmental risk reserve, Adult Social Care was still forecasting a small overspend in-year. This was after utilising £26m of grant funding; £27m of funding from the NHS to support hospital discharge arrangements; £22m infection control funding, together with other specific grants such as £3m to pay for costs associated with lateral flow testing in care homes.
- The Community and Environmental Services department was incurring additional costs of clearing up the flood damage in December 2020, which would be added to following the flooding in February 2021. Currently forecast at £250k it was anticipated that this would rise, with costs being met from the departmental reserve and flood reserve set aside in the budget.
- General waste levels had risen by 6%, or by 14000 tonnes from last year, while garden waste was likely to increase by 7%.
- An additional overspend of £668k had been seen in finance and general in January 2021, due to the purchase of additional IT equipment for digitally disadvantaged children.
- Table 4a in the report referenced the additional covid-related funding. Norfolk's allocation of the £120m workforce capacity grant to help boost staffing levels in care homes amounted to just over £2m which, together with an additional £0.5m to support clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, took the total covid funding to £107,247.
- Covid-related pressures set out in Revenue Annex 2 of the report amounted to £114.140m which amounted to a shortfall of just over £16m when taking into account the transfers to the corporate risk reserve.
- Within the capital programme, the agreement of the delivery of the Operations and Maintenance Campus project at Great Yarmouth would increase the capital programme by £17m, of which £9m would be funded through borrowing.
- Capital appendix 2 detailed the County Farms additional funding of £1.249m to meet a series of capital schemes across the estate, which was part of the Council's commitment to back this key economic sector in Norfolk.
- Cabinet was also being asked to approve the appointment of a Director of Independence Matters CIC, Independence Staff Matters Limited, and Home Support Matters CIC following changes to the roles of the current appointees.

- 16.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management welcomed the £1.249m investment in the county farms estate, highlighting that currently there were 121 agricultural tenants, providing an income of approximately £2.5m from the estate. He added that many of the farmhouses and buildings on the estate were in need of modernisation and the investment would allow work to be carried out which would hopefully increase income in the future.
- 16.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance highlighted the £600k investment in IT equipment for digitally disadvantaged children, adding that he endorsed the report which showed how finances were being controlled, but when money was needed Norfolk County Council was able to allocate money to ensure equipment was supplied where it was needed.
- 16.5 The Chairman emphasised how the department and corporate reserves had been structured to deal with pressures as issues arose.
- 16.6 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy thanked Cabinet for approving the Operations & Maintenance Campus proposal, and highlighted that the New Anglia LEP Pot B referred to earlier had been agreed.
- 16.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Approve** additional transfers of £2m to the Adult Social Services Covid Risk Reserve as set out in paragraph 2.21 of Appendix 1.
  2. **Approve** the continuation of financial support to Children's Services and Adult Social Care providers as described in paragraphs 5.27-5.30 of Revenue Appendix 1, including delegating authority to the Cabinet members for Children's Services and for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention to make a decision relating to the ongoing measures that are still needed to support providers until 30 June 2021, subject to those payments remaining within 2021-22 authorised budgets or from Business Risk Reserves.
  3. **Recommend to County Council** the addition of £1.249m to the capital programme to address necessary improvements to the County Farms Estate, as set out in detail in capital appendix 2, paragraph 4.
  4. **Approve** the appointment of Titus Adam, Financial Projects and Planning Manager, as a director of Independence Matters CIC, Independence Staff Matters Limited, and Home Support Matters CIC in accordance with Financial Regulations as set out in paragraph 2.1.
  5. **Note** the period 10 general fund forecast revenue **underspend of £0.021m** noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends;
  6. **Note** the COVID-19 grant funding received of **£107.514m**, the proposed use of that funding, and the related expenditure pressures resulting in net Covid-19 pressure, of **£16.001m** taking into account proposed transfers to the Corporate Risk reserve.
  7. **Note** the period 10 forecast shortfall in savings of **£18.045m**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to mitigate savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
  8. **Note** the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2021 of £19.706m, before taking into account any over/under spends;

9. **Note** the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2020-23 capital programmes.

## 16.8 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

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

**Appendix 1** summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Covid-19 pressures and associated grant income
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings
- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

**Appendix 2** summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

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

## 16.9 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 grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure.

## 17 Repton Property Developments Ltd Business Plan

- 17.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services which provided details of the Business Plan for Repton Property Developments Limited to 31 March 2022.

- 17.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management highlighted the following points:

- The Business Plan for Repton Property Developments Ltd sets out the Plan for the immediate future with an emphasis on the next financial year and covered the four sites being managed by Lovells, six smaller sites managed by Torrington and one site managed by the Norse Group.
- The Plan sets out the context and background to the company as well as the strategic objectives and the financial forecast.
- The Council had established Repton Property Developments Ltd in 2017, with the primary objective to undertake direct property development, with the aim of maximising financial returns, capital receipts and revenue income for the County Council. In addition the County Council, through its ownership of the company, sought wider social, economic and environmental outcomes, with the following secondary objectives:
  - Contributing to the meeting of Norfolk's growing housing demand;

- Provision of quality homes by raising design and performance standards;
  - Providing economic stimulus by increase overall capacity for property development and by taking control for developing specific sites and preventing land banking;
  - Supporting the creation of quality jobs and economic growth.
- Repton Property Developments Ltd would develop land identified as surplus by Norfolk County Council. The land was sold by Norfolk County Council to Repton Property Developments Ltd at market value based on the status of the land following a viability assessment, eg whether it had suitable planning permission.
  - Repton Property Developments Ltd had identified opportunities to develop existing Norfolk County Council owned assets with a potential to create over 600 residential properties, including 240 affordable dwellings.
  - The first site of 137 homes at Acle had received planning permission in June 2020 and construction had commenced at the site. 50% of the properties would be affordable; 26 would be shared ownership and 42 would be for rent via Clarion.
  - Planning permission for a second site of 200 homes at Hopton on Sea had been granted by Great Yarmouth Borough Council in October 2020.
  - Planning permission had been granted for a site in Caister.
  - Planning applications had been submitted for sites at Lingwood, Attleborough and Hunstanton.
  - During 2021-22 Repton Property Developments Ltd would be progressing other sites which were identified in the business plan.

- 17.3 The Chairman emphasised the primary and secondary objectives of the company; the primary objective being the financial return and the secondary objective being the quality of the housing being built. The Chairman also advised that the proposed development at Attleborough would consist of affordable housing only.
- 17.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the comments made, adding that the company, which had been established in 2017, was already contributing to the meeting of Norfolk's housing needs. He also referred to the development of a converted infant school at Hunstanton which would be used for housing which was being sympathetically converted including provision of adequate parking, which was important to local people.
- 17.5 The Chairman highlighted that Norfolk County Council owned sufficient land to complete the proposed developments without having to purchase land.
- 17.6 Cabinet reviewed the report and Business Plan to ensure it reflected the aspirations of the shareholder and **RESOLVED** to:
- **Approve** the Repton Property Developments Ltd Business Plan to 31 March 2022.
- 17.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Repton Property Developments Ltd Board has approved a Business Plan and is subsequently seeking Cabinet's consent to operate the Company in accordance with the Business Plan.

#### **17.8 Alternative Options**

NCC, as Shareholder, could set alternative objectives for the wholly owned company and request a revised Business Plan.

### **18 Hethel Innovation Ltd Business Plan and Proposed Expansion**

18.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services which provided details of the Hethel Innovation Ltd (HIL) Business Plan for 2021-22 which provided details of Hethel Innovation Ltd Business Plan for 2021-22.

18.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management highlighted the following:

- As outlined in the business plan, Hethel Innovation Ltd (HIL) was currently considering opportunities to grow its business.
- Following the purchase of land next to Hethel Innovation Centre, Hethel Innovation wished to develop its offer and expand the existing site.
- Further work was needed to secure planning permission and relevant funding.
- An officer Steering Group to oversee the operational development and delivery of the project was proposed, with the proposed Terms of Reference set out in Appendix B of the report.
- The Steering Group would have no decision-making powers. Responsibility for decision making remained with the responsible bodies or individuals, including the Hethel Innovation Ltd Board of Directors; the County Council's Cabinet and through the use of officer Delegated powers.
- Strategic oversight would continue to be the responsibility of the HIL Board of Directors and once it had been developed, the detailed business case would be presented to Cabinet for approval.
- The proposed expansion at Hethel Innovation Centre provided an opportunity to increase the space available for new and existing businesses, which would support the Norfolk economy. It would also provide space for expanding businesses, supporting them to stay in Norfolk.
- Hethel Innovation Ltd owned and operated the Hethel Engineering site and operated the Scottow Enterprise Park site which it leased from Norfolk County Council. The further expansion of the Hethel Engineering Centre site would build on the previous success of Hethel Innovation Ltd.

18.3 The Chairman noted that the business plan demonstrated another Norfolk County Council success story and the recent land acquisition would hopefully build on that as a catalyst for further success. The Chairman also highlighted the full range of projects Hethel Innovation Ltd was involved in was set out on page 569 of the agenda.

18.4 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy endorsed the report and highlighted the strategic alignment which stated HIL's purpose was to create

economic growth through innovation and productivity. The primary objective of Hethel Innovation Ltd was to deliver economic outputs for the benefit of Norfolk communities.

18.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships highlighted the number of businesses that had been supported over the years and the excellent contribution made to the economy throughout that time.

18.6 Cabinet reviewed the Business Plan to ensure it reflected the aspirations of the shareholder and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Approve** the HIL Business Plan for 2021-22.
- **Approve** the Terms of Reference for the Hethel Engineering Centre Expansion Project Officer Steering Group, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

#### 18.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

HIL Board has approved a business plan and is subsequently seeking Cabinet's consent to operate the company in accordance with the business plan. The business plan is attached as an annexe to this report.

The further expansion of the HEC site builds on the previous successes of HIL at HEC. The site, which was originally opened in 2006, has already been extended twice since that time. As can be seen in the HEC Expansion document in Appendix C, the site continues to support many businesses with 93% of startups supported surviving beyond 5 years which is well above the national average of 42.4% (sourced from ONS and Business Comparison).

#### 18.8 **Alternative Options**

The County Council, as shareholder, could set alternative objectives for the company and request a revised business plan.

### 19 **NCC Nurseries Limited Business Plan**

19.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services which provided details of the Business Plan for NCC Nurseries Limited Business Plan for 2021-22.

19.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management noted that NCC Nurseries Ltd had been established in 2019 with the primary objective of providing immediate nursery provision to fulfil Norfolk County Councils duty to secure sufficient early years childcare in Great Yarmouth, following the previous provider going into administration.

NCC Nurseries Ltd had a contract with Norfolk County Council to operate five nurseries.

Following the previous provider going into administration, the immediate priority had been to reopen the nurseries and this had been achieved by offering jobs to the former employees who had been made redundant; purchasing assets

from the liquidator and signing property licences to operate from the existing nursery buildings. Once the health and safety checks had been completed, the nurseries had reopened on 10 December 2019, only three weeks after closing.

The NCC Nurseries Ltd Business Plan for 2021-22 was based on providing nursery provision of up to 300 places, over five sites in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. It also included the company's vision and strategic objectives as well as the financial forecast that sat behind the business plan. The business plan also demonstrated through its current projections that NCC Nurseries Ltd was forecast to break even by 2022.

The objectives for 2021-22 were to finalise the property lease for each nursery; continue with assessing the financial viability of each nursery; and to find an alternative provider which would allow Norfolk County Council to withdraw from the market by 31 March 2022.

19.3 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy endorsed the report and recommendations, noting that when the previous provider went into administration, Norfolk County Council had taken on the challenge to offer the service. The Cabinet Member thanked Children's Services, the Finance Team and officers from Asset Management in the achievement, which had benefited Great Yarmouth.

19.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted how the County Council had worked quickly to provide the service, adding that it was part of the management plan that a financially viable alternative provider would be found to allow the County Council to withdraw from the market in due course.

19.5 Cabinet reviewed the report and Business Plan to ensure it reflected the aspirations of the shareholder and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Approve** the NCC Nurseries Limited Business Plan for 2021-22.

## 19.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

NCC Nurseries Limited Board approved the 2021-22 Business Plan on 5 February 2021 and is subsequently seeking Cabinet's consent to operate the company in accordance with the Business Plan. The Business Plan is attached as an annexe to this report.

## 19.7 **Alternative Options**

The County Council, as shareholder, could set alternative objectives for the company and request a revised Business Plan.

## 20 **Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property**

20.1 Cabinet received the report (including an exempt appendix) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, proactively 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.



- 20.2 The Chairman referred to the exempt Appendix which contained commercially sensitive information, which Cabinet Members had received a copy of and said that, as no one had indicated they wished to refer to it in the discussion, it would not be discussed during the meeting. He added that the information would become available through the Land Registry once the purchase had been completed.
- 20.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset management introduced the report and moved the recommendations which were for Cabinet to agree two items for disposal and one acquisition.

**Hunstanton Library, Westgate.**

Cabinet noted it was proposed to transfer the freehold of the library site to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk for nil consideration. In return Norfolk County Council would acquire a modern and flexible building where it could provide a library and other council services.

Following successful bids to the Cabinet Office and Local Government Association One Public Estate programme, funding had been secured to support the feasibility study for regeneration schemes in Hunstanton. One of the schemes – the redevelopment of the Hunstanton bus station site which would deliver a larger modern public library, modern retail service units and new public conveniences together with 47 apartments, of which 20% would be affordable, was now coming to fruition. The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk would be paying all the development costs and would retain 100% of the developer risk associated with the scheme.

The key benefits to the County Council in contributing the freehold value to the scheme were the acquisition of a modern, flexible building which did not require significant capital investment and the removal of a backlog of maintenance requirements.

The disposal value was included in an exempt report as it contained commercially sensitive information, although the details would be published on the Land Registry website once the disposal had been completed.

Planning permission for the scheme had been granted on 7 December 2020, with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Cabinet approving the proposal on 2 February 2021.

Until the new library was ready for occupation in 2023, the Hunstanton Library Service would move to a temporary location at the Valentine Centre, Hunstanton.

In return for transferring the property freehold to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk County Council would enter into a 999 year lease for the new library at a peppercorn rent with an associated service charge and depreciation fund to support the maintenance of the building.

**Land at Regent Place, King's Lynn.**

Cabinet noted that this land had been identified as being surplus to highway use and was not required by Norfolk County Council. It was proposed to

dispose of the land to the adjoining landowner as no viable market had been determined for the land. The capital receipt would not be significant and the main advantage to Norfolk County Council was that the land would be removed from the portfolio and future liability for unforeseen costs would be removed.

- 20.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships welcomed the new library at Hunstanton and noted that libraries were now local contact points for many County Council services, providing a wealth of information, support and advice for people of all ages.
- 20.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed that the increased size and increased facilities at a new library in Hunstanton were welcomed. The new library would provide a community hub and would also include a tourist information centre, which would be well received.

20.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Formally declare** the existing Hunstanton Library site surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, and  
Enter a lease with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk for the new library building and instruct the Director of Property to oversee the completion of the acquisition on the best terms possible.
2. **Formally declare** the land at Regent Place, King's Lynn surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.

20.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Disposing of the Hunstanton Library site to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk facilitates their project and NCC acquires a new library building. The declaring the Regent Place land surplus to County Council use means that the Corporate Property Team can complete the disposal.

20.8 **Alternative Options**

There are no viable options other than to retain both sites.

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

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

The Chairman advised Cabinet that Julie Mortimer, Committee Services Officer, would be retiring from the Council at the end of April 2021. Cabinet thanked Julie for her hard work in supporting Cabinet and wished her well for the future.

The meeting ended at 11.55am

**Chairman**

**Cabinet**  
**8 March 2021**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

<b>Agenda item 6</b>	<b>Public Question Time</b>
6.1	<p><b>Question from Joanne Thurtle</b>  What has the County Councillor for the Gorleston St Andrews Division spent their highways budget on each year for the last four years please?</p> <p><b>Response by the: Deputy Leader &amp; Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy (County Councillor for Gorleston St Andrews Division).</b>  Thank you for your question and the opportunity to demonstrate the investment I have been able to make in the Gorleston St Andrews Division with my highways budget over the last four years:</p> <p>2020/21 – Traffic Regulation Order to provide waiting restrictions, due to access and obstruction issues to businesses on Faraday Road. In addition, further road markings at the top of High Street / High Road;</p> <p>2019/20 – Traffic Regulation Order for waiting restrictions on Gorleston High Street to resolve obstructions to buses, caused by on street parking. In addition, the installation of white lining on Marine Parade;</p> <p>2018/19 – Installation of wooden highway verge posts at Kennedy Avenue, Recreation Road and various other locations in the area;</p> <p>2017/18 - Kennedy Avenue – installation of wooden highway verge posts at the Bridge Road end. Suffolk Road - the installation of tactile paving to the footway and additional road marking to assist with traffic management near the surgery.</p> <p>A range of other local improvements have also been discussed and agreed with the local Highway Engineer over the same period. These have been delivered for the local community using a range of other funding sources, separate from the Local Member Fund.</p>
6.2	<p><b>Question from Paul Neale</b>  Waste Recycling. Residents of Norfolk dutifully dispose of their plastic waste in domestic recycling bins, believing that the council will recycle it responsibly, without exacerbating the climate emergency. However, under the heading ‘Plastics What we do with your waste’, your website says:  ‘We stopped collecting plastics for recycling at our centres in 2017 because we have not been able to find a market for them. You can put certain types of plastic in your kerbside recycling bin’. A link Visit Recycle for Norfolk for more information opens a page saying ‘page not found’.</p> <p>Will the cabinet member responsible explain what the council does with all the plastic waste collected in Norfolk?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste:</b>  The good news is that the plastics bottles, pots, tubs and trays collected from householders in Norfolk are processed for recycling, and useful information about recycling is available on the Norfolk Recycles website at <a href="http://www.norfolkrecycles.com">www.norfolkrecycles.com</a></p> <p>In Norfolk, it is the seven District, City and Borough Councils that collect recycling</p>

	<p>from householders and not the County Council. All the collected material is sorted at a facility near Norwich, which is operated by a County Council owned company, and the separated plastics are then sold as a commodity on the recycling markets, although for some materials at some times, this does come at a cost.</p> <p>That process is entirely separate to the pilot to collect mixed rigid plastics at County Council recycling centres, which included items such as garden furniture and toys, as the market for that mix of material was not sustainable. However, that is a position we continue to monitor and when a sustainable option is available, we will look to introduce it.</p>
6.3	<p><b>Question from Cllr Judith Lubbock</b> In the new recycling centre will there be a facility for cleaning and repairing potentially usable goods in partnership with a charity thus providing employment and training opportunities for those in need, similar to that provided by Suffolk County Council?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste:</b> There are actually two new Recycling Centres being delivered in the Norwich area that are due to open by the end of this year. These are the Norwich North Recycling Centre near the airport and the Norwich South Recycling Centre at the Harford Park and Ride site.</p> <p>Both new Recycling Centres will feature a prominent and extensive reuse facility to complement the County Council's wider network of reuse shops and we will look to use the additional space at the two new shops to expand our reuse activities to include repair and function testing of donations, training and upskilling staff employed to work in the shops and making partnerships with third parties where appropriate.</p> <p>The current intention is that although these new reuse facilities will not be managed by a charity, the County Council will maintain its approach to having a charity partner which is currently the East Anglian Air Ambulance. We intend to keep the overall approach under review whilst national waste policy continues to develop around this area.</p>
6.4	<p><b>Question from Trudie Hannaway</b> When was the last time Cllr Borrett, cabinet member for ASC met personally (one to one) with a disabled person (or online) to discuss their concerns?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention</b> Thank you for your question. I met with representatives from the DNNG on the 18th February to discuss their concerns.</p>
6.5	<p><b>Question from Saul Penfold</b> UK holiday bookings are booming. What is the council doing to ensure Norfolk businesses benefit and can bounce back whilst maintaining safety for local residents and visitors?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy:</b></p>

	<p>The tourism sector has been significantly impacted by lockdowns and restrictions brought in to fight COVID-19 over the past year. In response to the pandemic the local authorities and New Anglia LEP set up a Norfolk Strategic Fund worth £6.75m. This included a £2.225m Tourism Sector Support Package which was launched on 30 July 2020 and was the first project to be approved from the Fund.</p> <p>The project, led by Norfolk County Council, in partnership with all seven district councils and Visit East of England, has been helping the tourism sector to recover from the impact of COVID-19. The project aims to make Norfolk as safe as possible for both visitors to the county and residents, helping to create a quality visitor experience whilst maintaining key Public Health messages.</p> <p>Activity to date has included improving the presentation, cleanliness and hygiene of key locations and communication with visitors. A small grants programme has also supported businesses with the costs of adapting their premises. To date, funding has been awarded to over 300 local businesses to enable the purchase of items relating to social distancing and hygiene requirements, including signage, barriers, personal protective equipment, hand sanitiser stations and protective screens. Autumn and Winter Adaptation Grants were also available to enable businesses to extend the seasonal offer throughout autumn and winter where possible.</p> <p>Funding has also been invested by the districts and Visit East of England in a variety of sector support measures, including marketing campaigns to promote Covid-safe visits such as Unexplored England and Escape the Everyday, promotion of the Visit Britain UK-wide industry standard and consumer mark 'We're Good to Go', as well as distribution of information for both tourism businesses and visitors via the Visit East of England website under the banner 'Know Before you Go'.</p> <p>This work has supported the wider Norfolk Recovery Plan and complemented the New Anglia LEP's Visitor Economy Recovery Plan. Norfolk County Council's work with partners also supports the ongoing work being undertaken at a regional and national level with VisitBritain and VisitEngland.</p>
6.6	<p><b>Question from Marian Chapman</b></p> <p>In 2013, Philip Barlow the inner-south London coroner, said primary school pupil Ella Kissi-Debrah's death was caused by acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure. It is now widely accepted that primary school children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution. Their lungs are still developing, and toxic air can stunt their growth, causing significant health problems in later life.</p> <p>As the council has previously stated that it will be taking the opportunity to consider how to improve air quality around schools, could members tell us what plans are to be put in place to collect data and quantify the problem before taking the necessary vital remedial action?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b></p> <p>Thank you for raising this important issue.</p> <p>Air pollution is a local, national and international problem. All local authorities in Norfolk review and assess local air quality as part of our statutory duties under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and we are encouraging schools to develop a school travel plan and to champion journeys to school by more sustainable forms of transport and support pupil's health, wellbeing and safety.</p>

	<p>There are also actions we can all do to tackle harmful emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car share</li> <li>• Walking and cycling part or all a commute or the school run.</li> <li>• Turning off our engine when stopped. Idling contributes to making air pollution worse.</li> <li>• Don't drive under pressure. Correctly inflated tyres can save fuel and reduce pollution</li> </ul> <p>Our travel plans include encouraging people to cycle and where possible use buses or trains noting that COVID restrictions require precautions to be taken when using public transport.</p>
6.7	<p><b>Question from Sara Heath</b></p> <p>The DRE system, highlighted for years as an issue by disabled people and their advocates is inconsistent, unfair, takes too much time, effort. The system is against lower income families, in that for example, you have to be able to afford the utilities in the first place to be in a category to get help and it is paid in arrears. It is not acceptable to disabled Norfolk disabled residents and many fail to access it satisfactorily. The differences between what some attain and others do not, is unfair. There is no explanation of the calculation in detail. When will Cllr. Borrett listen and change NCC DRE system?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council regularly looks at the DRE scheme to try and make it is as easy to use as possible, and we encourage people to take it up. The DRE approach is based upon best practice advice and is centred on an individual's personal circumstances. The Council believes the system is fair because it looks at people's declared disability related costs alongside their care plan. This will mean there are differences from person to person because individual circumstances are all different. Service users can have details of their calculations, and many do already ask for and receive them.</p>
6.8	<p><b>Question from Ellie Fairfoot</b></p> <p>How many of the potentially 3000 disabled people who were unlawfully charged for services have - as at 2nd March - received the refund due to them? For clarity I mean that the monies owed to them has been paid into their bank account (not just credited to their direct payment or care account)</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention.</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. All of those affected by the changes to the charging policy have been written to setting out their personal position following the recalculation of charges. Those letters contained details of their individual specific circumstances and the process that was being undertaken to ensure all payments are correct. This process includes how to provide bank account details to the Council for those that wish to receive a refund direct in to their own personal account. As at 2nd March, 121 individuals had requested payment in this way, provided the necessary information and received their refunds.</p>

6.9	<p><b>Question 1 from Peter</b></p> <p>As a person with a Learning Disability, Physical Disabilities and Autism I wish to ask if two bedroom (as support may not be needed 24/7 but is needed from time to time like in a pandemic) bungalows with wet rooms which are on one level suitable for wheelchairs (even if we are not wheelchairs users all the time but need a wheelchair for a time when discharged from hospital) will be built as this also affects our ability to be discharged from hospital in a timely way and is important for our mental health?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Today's report recommends building different types of homes to meet different needs. If Cabinet agree, we will build homes designed to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, including those who use a wheelchair. Many of the new homes will be designed so that support is available 24 hours a day. This will usually mean that there is space within the building for staff to stay overnight.</p>
6.10	<p><b>Question 2 from Peter</b></p> <p>Will the committee advise what the timeline is for building to be completed and will you be consulting users like me as to what sort of properties we actually need and ensure we are part of the entire process (I would like to be included) from initial planning with builders and housing associations to final roll out and for those not consulted but who wish to follow progress how will you keep us all informed?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Today's recommendation in the cabinet paper is to build 181 homes during the next three years. If the recommendation is agreed, we will hold workshops in May to develop a guide that describes what the new homes should look and feel like. A first draft of this guide was included in the appendices to the cabinet paper and is based on what people have already told us. The workshops will help us improve on this. The times and dates and how to book a place will be advertised after the cabinet decision has been made.</p>
6.11	<p><b>Question from Richard Hawker</b></p> <p>Please give full details of how the £1.024M development funding for the NWL from the Department for Transport has been capitalised into the 2020 - 2021 capital budget, and give a detailed breakdown of how it has been spent this year.</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport</b></p> <p>The Norwich Western Link Strategic Outline Business Case was approved by the Department for Transport in May 2020 and they included a contribution of £1.024m towards developing the Outline Business Case for the scheme. The approved 2020/21 budget allocated a total of £4.055m for development of the project. This is broken down into procurement (£637,000), design (£931,000), statutory process (£1.94m) and Outline Business Case development (£544,000). There is a degree of overlap between these activities, and the Outline Business Case report is reliant on the design and other elements of the project for its completion. The development of the scheme for the financial year 2020/21 is in line with the budget allocation.</p>



**Cabinet  
8 March 2021  
Local Member Questions**

<b>Agenda item 7</b>	<b>Local Member Issues/Questions</b>
7.1	<p><b>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</b>  <b>West Winch Bypass</b>  Can Cabinet change the bypass application to state the truth: the A10 cannot support more development in West Winch until the bypass opens?</p> <p>Highways England have a holding objection on the whole Hardwick Green Development because there is no highways capacity.  West Winch Parish Council's own highways consultant report says :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCC's report puts number of HGV's at 0% instead of at least 10% on the proposed roundabout</li> <li>• detrimental impact of 350 new homes would be significant strain on the A10 at peak times, more queues and more accidents.</li> </ul> <p>The A10 here is rural road with extensive field frontage and homes and a high accident rate.</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport</b></p> <p>NCC's report is factual and truthful.</p>
7.2	<p><b>Question from Cllr Tim Adams</b>  In December it was promised that repayments would be made following the High Court decision that the MIG charges were discriminatory yet members of the public tell us that the calculations promised for the week of 8th Feb are yet to start. Why is this?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Everyone affected has been written to as promised and has been given the calculation of their own personal position.</p>
7.3	<p><b>Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone</b>  How many external consultants has the council employed during the last two years and how much has this cost the council?</p> <p><b>Response by the Leader</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. The Council makes use of external consultants where appropriate including to deliver specific projects and in particular when it is not cost effective to employ staff with specific skills "in house".</p> <p>The Council publishes <a href="#">spend data</a> which broadly categorises spend relating to</p>

	<p>"consultancy". In 2019 and 2020 this spend totalled £1.089m with 55 suppliers.</p>
7.4	<p><b>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</b> How many insurance Claims for accidents caused by defects on the highway has the council had in the last two years and how much has it had to pay out as a result of these claims?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> 196 claims have been upheld. This is against a total of 841 claims received citing defects on the highway (including winter maintenance and tree related claims) in the two-year period between the 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020.</p> <p>In that period, a total of £162,864 has been paid.</p>
7.5	<p><b>Question from Cllr Dan Roper</b> What is the latest data on the level of Care Home Deaths from Covid in Norfolk and how does this compare with the trends across the East of England and England overall?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention</b> Care home deaths are declining across the country, region and county. According to the latest data reported to the Care Quality Commission, the number of deaths in Norfolk care homes was 13 in the week of 20th-26th Feb. In the week of 20th-26th Feb, 29% of all care home deaths in Norfolk involved Covid-19, compared to a figure of 25% for the East of England, and 19% for England.</p>
7.6	<p><b>Question 1 from Cllr David Harrison</b> The Eastern Daily Press reported on 23 February 2021 that there were 15 areas where the infection rate was growing (bucking the overall trend in Norfolk). Do you have any explanation as to why this is?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b> Thank you for your question. The key context here is that case numbers are low across the county. The EDP report at the level of Middle Super Output Area or MSOA, which typically have populations of 5,000-10,000 people. In the week from 21st-28th February, the largest number of total cases for any single MSOA in Norfolk was 16, and most had fewer than 10 cases. Viewed in this context, it can be seen how a single outbreak in a workplace or large household could result in a temporary increase in the overall rate at the MSOA scale. This leads to variances across the county.</p>
7.7	<p><b>Question 2 from Cllr David Harrison</b> Why is the rate of Covid infections lower in Suffolk than Norfolk?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b> Thank you for your question. The current infection rate in Norfolk is only marginally higher than Suffolk, with a difference of less than 10 cases per 100,000 people</p>

	<p>according to data on 3rd March. This difference arose in January following the lockdown, before which case rates were almost identical. Rates of decrease from mid-January to mid-February have been similar in Norfolk and Suffolk, however rates of decrease have been higher in Norfolk compared to Suffolk since mid-February. It is also the case that while North Norfolk has had the lowest average case rates of all local authorities in the two counties throughout the second wave, low case rates have also been seen in the rural local authorities of Mid, East and West Suffolk, bringing down the average for Suffolk. Ipswich has seen rates of infection comparable to Norwich throughout the second wave.</p>
7.8	<p><b>Question 1 from Cllr Terry Jermy</b> The data used to produce the Thetford Network Improvement Strategy was collected in the 2017 and the final report published some years later. It is in danger of becoming out of date before it is actioned. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm what recommendations from the report have thus far been implemented and what the timetable is for further implementation?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> Since adoption of the Thetford market town network improvement strategy in April 2020, the council has been taking forward implementation of the action plan. We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioned a study looking at how to address traffic impacts through the town and on the A11, using information from the traffic data collected. This study will report shortly following conclusion of discussions with Suffolk County Council and Highways England on interim findings</li> <li>• Started a review of the Walking and Cycling Strategy, which will underpin the development of networks across market towns including Thetford. This work is vital as a prerequisite to drawing down funding from government for scheme delivery</li> <li>• Commenced on site with delivery of the Croxton Road cycleway. We were successful in finding funding for this scheme from the New Anglia LEP Growth Deal. We were able to use funding earmarked for delivery of the Thetford Enterprise Park roundabout following its successful delivery in 2019</li> </ul> <p>Further delivery of the action plan depends on funding being accessed and, in most cases, we are waiting to see details of opportunities. I had a useful conversation with the Greater Thetford Partnership Manager last week where we discussed delivery of the network improvement strategy action plan and how these projects might be taken forward with the partnership. This was a very positive discussion and reflects progress being made within the town by the various partners involved.</p>
7.9	<p><b>Question 2 from Cllr Terry Jermy</b> Thetford residents are deeply concerned about proposals for a new quarry at Barnham, just over the border in Suffolk. The transport plan for the application will see dozens of additional HGV movements through Thetford as a result. This application has been objected to by Barnham Parish Council, Thetford Town Council and Norfolk County Council. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm whether Norfolk County Council supports this planning application and resulting additional HGV movements through Thetford?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> Whilst the County Council was not initially consulted by Suffolk County Council, through their role as Planning Authority, the proposals have now been considered</p>

	<p>by Council officers and a formal response subsequently issued.</p> <p>The HGV movements accessing the site will do so via a one way system, with traffic entering the site from the A11 via connecting roads (which are all within Suffolk) and then leaving via roads (within Suffolk) before connecting to the A134 in Suffolk. At which point some of the traffic heads north along the A134 into Norfolk (Thetford) and then some traffic continues south on the A134 within Suffolk itself.</p> <p>The submitted Transport Assessment indicates that there will be approximately 3-4 loads per hour (i.e. 6-8 HGV movements). Given the traffic will be dispersed in both directions when it reaches the A134, and the modest hourly HGV movements involved, particularly when compared to the existing flows on the A134, the Council could not substantiate a highway related objection to the proposals on the Norfolk network.</p>
7.10	<p><b>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</b></p> <p>It seems from the budget last Wednesday that the government hasn't listened to this administration's pleas for additional long term funding for adult social care and services more generally. Will the cabinet member tell me what he asked from the government and what responses he received?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Finance</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. The Council supports the Local Government Association submission made ahead of the 2021 Budget which called for "a clear timescale with specific deadlines for how reforms to adult social care provision, eligibility and funding will be introduced."</p> <p><a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-march-2021-budget-submission#adult-social-care-reform">https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-march-2021-budget-submission#adult-social-care-reform</a>. The Council itself engages regularly with Government to make representations around a wide range of issues including long term funding for social care and other services. However, the Council does not as a rule make submissions to the Treasury in respect of the Budget, as these tend to have a different focus and in general there are other, more relevant opportunities to communicate with Government on these matters. As the question identifies, this has indeed proven to be the case in the Spring 2021 Budget which included limited coverage of social care. At this point it appears unlikely that reform of Adult Social Care funding will be progressed imminently, as a recent Government response to the House of Lords report on lessons from COVID-19 stated that "<i>In the longer term, the Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals next year [2022].</i>"</p> <p><a href="https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4915/documents/49199/default/">https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4915/documents/49199/default/</a>).</p> <p>Recent examples of the Council's direct engagement with Government on the issue of Adult Social Care and long term funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The submission to the Spending Review 2020, which called for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b><i>"Recognising the importance of and adequately fund Social Care</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Plans should be published to outline how the government intends to fundamentally reform the funding of children's and adults social care on an ongoing, permanent basis, to provide stability to the safeguarding and care sector and certainty for vulnerable people needing care.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Although welcome, the confirmation that the additional £1bn of</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*funding nationally will be maintained for the next five years fails to recognise that **additional pressures are being experienced and are forecast to continue across social care budgets every year.***

- ***Adult social care must be placed on a sustainable financial footing.** Very severe pressures are faced across adult social care including as a result of population growth and increasingly complex demand. Proposals to reform social care funding (the long delayed green paper) should be published as soon as possible.”*

- The response to the consultation on the 2021-22 Provisional Settlement, which called for:

***“Long-term funding allocations and quantum of funding***

*The Council understands the pressures on central Government capacity and resources which have been caused by COVID-19 and recognises why this has led to a one-year Spending Review and Settlement announcement. In this context, the early indications provided at the Spending Review were welcome, and the Council is grateful for the additional financial support for COVID-19 pressures which is being provided through 2020-21 and into 2021-22. However, the fundamental principle remains that longer term certainty and funding allocations are key to enabling robust decision-making and the financial stability of local authorities. It is notable that the Government has provided the NHS with a funding commitment to 2023-24 and it is disappointing that local government has not been afforded the same level of priority.*

*The Council would strongly endorse the call from the Society of County Treasurers (SCT) that it is critical for there to be a return as soon as possible to multi-year settlements to improve certainty, and that future Settlements are in line with the Hudson Review recommendations regarding timings.*

*More broadly, a major concern for the Council is that the overall quantum of funding for local government is not sufficient and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Putting aside the short-term funding support for COVID-19, and the assumptions being made around levels of council tax, the Settlement Funding Assessment includes only a minimal increase for Norfolk County Council (0.1%). This lack of any material increase in the core settlement is a major issue for the long-term sustainability of the Council and it will not be viable for a similar approach to be adopted at future settlements.*

*The fact that increases in core spending power are predicated on increases in council tax are a critical issue as they place the burden of funding on hard pressed local taxpayers and make assumptions about increases in the tax base which may not be realised. Even if the full increase in council tax were to be achieved, the additional resources from council tax are not adequate to meet funding pressures, or to recover the historic reductions in government funding which have been experienced since 2010-11. Local government has absorbed the impact of these significant funding reductions, delivering efficiency savings while maintaining vital local services. However, the ability to continue to do this has now been almost completely exhausted and*

	<p><i>therefore opportunities to reprioritise and deliver further savings will be limited, unless the quantum of funding is increased, or the responsibilities of local government are reviewed. Any future savings requirements are therefore likely to have an impact on service delivery.</i></p> <p><b>Reform of local government funding</b></p> <p><i>Although sympathetic to the pressures central Government currently faces, the Council is disappointed that long overdue reforms to local government finance appear to be low on the Government's list of priorities. There is an urgent need to progress a range of reforms including the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates reform and localisation, addressing High Needs Block funding, and developing a robust and sustainable funding model for social care. Plans should be brought forward at the earliest opportunity to outline how the Government intends to fundamentally reform the funding of children's and adults social care on an ongoing, permanent basis. It is vital this review is prioritised to provide long term stability to the safeguarding and care sector, and certainty for vulnerable people needing care."</i></p> <p>It should be noted that the Government rarely responds directly as part of these engagement processes.</p>
7.11	<p><b>Question from Cllr David Rowntree</b> Now the Norwich Western Link Outline Business Case has been delayed again until June will the cabinet member take the time to reflect on alternatives that could alleviate the rat running in Weston Longville, Ringland and other communities so they can get relief now rather than risk everything on an increasingly expensive and unpopular road scheme?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> We went through a very thorough options assessment to determine the best solution to the traffic problems to the west of Norwich, as well as a public consultation on what people thought the main issues were, and the solutions they wanted us to consider. Both of these gave us a very strong basis for pursuing creating a link road between Broadland Northway and the A47 and the documents that evidence this are available to view on the County Council website. I speak regularly to local parish councils in the area to the west of Norwich, who have a very good understanding of the day-to-day issues their communities face, and the overwhelming message I get from them is that they want us to get on and build the Norwich Western Link as soon as possible.</p>
7.12	<p><b>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</b> Commercial confidentiality is being used withhold details of why the award of a contract for the NWL has been delayed. It is in the public interest and does not compromise any party if the cabinet member tells us whether the reason for the delay is that the cost of the scheme is likely to exceed to £153m. Has the likely cost of the NWL now exceeded £153m?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> Commercial confidentiality is an accepted requirement of any procurement process. This is to ensure that no party is given an unfair advantage or disadvantage. While</p>

	<p>this process is still active, I cannot give any further details for the reason for the delay.</p>
7.13	<p><b>Question from Cllr Danny Douglas</b> The Governance review of major projects by Local Partnerships excluded any investigation or explanation of the £25m overspend on the Northern Distributor Road. Will the cabinet member now explain why that overspend happened without council approval being sought before the spending was committed?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> The review completed by Local Partnerships was in response to the recommendation agreed by Cabinet in December 2019. Reports reviewing the construction phase of the Broadland Northway and lessons learnt were considered by Scrutiny Committee in 2019. These reports have also been published on the County Council's website. The Lessons Learnt report sets out the various project spending reports and approvals.</p>
7.14	<p><b>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker</b> In response to my question last month about how many first time buyers has the Council helped to get a foot on the property ladder through the new homes that have been built on surplus Council property since 2017 you said this was not a metric that the Council collects. In 2017 the Conservative manifesto pledged 'to help first time buyers get a foot on the property ladder by building new homes on surplus council land'. How many first time buyers you pledged to help have bought properties developed on surplus council land since 2017?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services &amp; Asset Management:</b> As Cllr Walker notes in her own question, it is not a metric that is collected. Therefore it is not clear why she has asked a question, which she already knows the answer to.</p> <p>I have for reference included my response to the previous question below</p> <p>Repton is getting it right in terms of a balanced strategy. A good mix of market housing, alongside affordable, and shared equity products of different sizes. Cllr Walker has also continued to ignore the affordable housing that Repton is building across their schemes.</p> <p>Is it Labour's policy not to build either affordable rental properties or shared ownership properties, the latter of which will of course particularly appeal to first time buyers? We have some Labour members asking for more social rent, some for more affordable rent and Cllr Walker for private sale.</p> <p>This Administration is clearly delivering on its 2017 Manifesto pledges to help first time buyers get a foot on the housing ladder, I would draw Cllr Walker's attention to Acle where Repton is exceeding the number of affordable units and Attleborough, where we have just submitted a planning application for a mixed scheme of exclusively affordable and shared equity units.</p> <p>----- <i>Response to previous Cabinet Question:</i></p>

	<p><i>“ This is not a metric that the Council collects and we are not aware of any other authority that collates this information around their own land. Unless a first-time buyer is clearly identifiable (for example through participation in a Government scheme) this information is not something that can be easily collected.</i></p> <p><i>Land sold (especially prior to 2017) may have or passed through several owners before coming forward for development. Local planning policy will determine the tenure of any new homes that are built in an areas – on any land – and will reflect the local need, as determined by the Local Planning Authority, based upon their assessment of the housing market in each District. They will record these numbers for all land where planning is received and where development starts. It may not always be possible to identify whether a purchaser is a first-time buyer or not.</i></p> <p><i>Where the Council is developing homes through its housing company Repton – there are a variety of products that will appeal to first time buyers, including shared ownership products. These will provide high quality homes at an accessible price. At Acle, the first development where Repton is on site, we have exceeded the ‘policy compliant’ amount of affordable housing - supporting another key part of our housing market.</i></p>
7.15	<p><b>Question from Cllr David Collis</b></p> <p>In response to my question last month about work the Council has undertaken with the Environment Agency and local landowners to ensure ditches, dykes, and drains are well maintained and kept clear over the last four years he replied Council takes a risk-based approach to formal enforcement action and works with local landowners where issues are identified. However in the 2017 Conservative manifesto was a pledge to reduce the risk of flooding by working with the Environment Agency and local landowners to ensure ditches, dykes and rains are well maintained and kept clear. That clearly didn’t happen. Why not?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste:</b></p> <p>As explained in the previous response, the County Council has proactively worked with all agencies and landowners over the last four years, to drive forward the maintenance and improvement of drainage assets, which are owned and maintained by a variety of private individuals and public bodies.</p> <p>In terms of the most recent event, Council officers are continuing their investigations into the flooding that occurred in late December 2020. While the causes of flooding can be complex, early findings show that up to 50mm of rain fell on saturated ground following three months of wet weather in the autumn. This led to drainage systems becoming inundated with floodwater and watercourses overtopping.</p> <p>Following the flooding, in January 2021 Cabinet agreed to convene a series of meetings with strategic partners across Norfolk, including District Councils, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Internal Drainage Boards amongst others to help mitigate these increasingly common extreme weather events and ensure even closer working together. The first meeting of this Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance has been held, chaired by Lord Dannatt, and further meetings are planned.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council has allocated an extra £650,000 capital and revenue funding, which will be invested to enable faster repairs to the road network and</p>



	<p>existing drainage systems and enable the large number of Flood Investigation Reports to be completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>A further £1.5m has been allocated by the County Council in 2021/22 for a Flood Reserve to assist with flood related issues.</p>
7.16	<p><b>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</b></p> <p>The 2017 Conservative manifesto pledged to increase Parish Partnership funding to £1m. It hasn't happened and he along with other cabinet members and Conservative councillors voted against it at full council. Will he explain why this manifesto pledge has been broken?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b></p> <p>Highway maintenance has also been a priority over the four years of this administration. I am proud to say that this has helped to maintain our high public satisfaction levels with the Highways service as demonstrated in the 2020 National Highways &amp; Transportation (NHT) customer satisfaction results. These details are also contained in the Highway Capital Programme Report on today's agenda.</p> <p>It is also worth highlighting that the value of parish partnership schemes is also driven by demand from parishes. The last few years have been challenging for all financial budgets, and parish councils are no exception. Despite these challenging circumstances, we have been able to boost the Parish Partnership by £50,000 per year to £350,000 which has been additionally enhanced by the Safety Camera Partnership. In 2021/22 the Parish Partnership programme will support the delivery of schemes totalling £715,489. These details are also contained within the Parish Partnership Report on today's agenda.</p>
7.17	<p><b>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</b></p> <p>I have been contacted by some residents who have been told that they must return the device they have been provided with for remote learning when their child returns to school this week. The potential for self-isolation and home learning will still be a factor for many of our learners, as will be their household's limited access to digital equipment. How many of the laptops that have been purchased by Norfolk County Council and distributed to schools are parents expected to return to their school?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services:</b></p> <p>Many thanks Cllr. Rumsby for your question. As children return to the school classroom many schools will ask parents to return laptops so that they can use them throughout the school day. Schools will want to make use of them in an approach to teaching and learning that builds on the experiences that children have acquired whilst learning remotely at home. Schools may also want to adapt and develop the software in order to reflect the school-based curriculum, now that children are working face to face in school. At any point, where a child is required to isolate at home devices would once again be provided to enable remote learning.</p> <p>Schools own the devices, including those provided by NCC, and we do not require them to be returned to the council. We do support schools in wanting to make the most effective use of devices in their school day, as they will need to maintain and</p>

	service equipment, ensure it remains fit for purpose and utilise them fully across the school day.
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**Written Supplementary Questions requiring written responses from the Cabinet Meeting held on  
Monday 8 March 2021**

Agenda item 6 Public Question Time	
Supplementary Question from Mr Paul Neale	<p>Mr Neale stated that the information about recycling on the website was still unavailable which indicated no waste was being recycled from kerbside bins. As a supplementary question, Mr Neale asked whether the County Council was treating other plastics, such as rigid plastics as the Environmental Policy dated November 2019 stated that the County Council was striving to meet the global challenge by working towards carbon neutrality by 2030 and if not, where was the waste going.</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste</b> The Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste agreed to provide specific information about rigid plastics and to clarify what was sent as waste for incineration at energy from waste plants.</p> <p>The information is that for plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays these can go in the kerbside recycling bin for collection by all the local district councils across Norfolk. For other rigid plastic items such as toys, garden furniture and plant pots, these are currently accepted at the County Council's recycling centres either in the Reuse Shops or the non-recyclable container.</p> <p>The County Council tested the recycling of rigid plastics at five recycling centres but had to suspend the initiative in 2017 because the facility where material was sent no longer wanted the material. We continue to search for opportunities for this material, and when we have a viable and secure market for the material and a sustainable solution can be provided we will look to reintroduce the recycling option at the recycling centres, an approach that is in keeping with the County Council's Environmental Policy.</p> <p>Currently residual waste from the County Council's recycling centres is generally used as a fuel in incinerators to provide heat and or electricity.</p> <p>In relation to comments about content on webpages any concerns can be raised with Joel Hull, Head of Waste for Norfolk County Council via the email: <a href="mailto:joell.hull@norfolk.gov.uk">joell.hull@norfolk.gov.uk</a> who will be happy to help.</p>
Supplementary question from Marian Chapman	<p>Given that there are a range of well-established measures, as well as more innovative solutions and quick wins available, what range of measures both physical and behavioural, would the council recommend should be put in place within schools and their immediate environment to improve air quality and in this context will the council consider following the Greater London Authority and appoint a school's liaison officer to work on these issues as a matter of some urgency?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b> Air quality in Norfolk is significantly different from those in greater London and we have no plans to appoint a school's liaison officer to work on these issues as we provide support to schools through our Road Safety and Major Projects team, working in partnership to develop and deliver projects that encourage active travel.</p>

Supplementary Question from Sara Heath	<p>Cllr Borrett I quote from your reply 'based upon best practice advice' 'The council believes the system is fair' Again we disabled people are telling you about our living experiences. Have you learned nothing from the recent judgement finding ASC guilty of discrimination against disabled people in Norfolk costing thousands of £ instead? When , Cllr Borrett will you listen to real concerns as is your responsibility.</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b> Thank you for your question. As you are aware the Council acted swiftly in response to the outcome of the Judicial Review. Included in the response was an undertaking to review the policy, and a major part of this will be listening to real concerns of the people affected.</p>
Supplementary question from Richard Hawker	<p>As a supplementary question Mr Hawker asked for reassurance that the £1.024m from the Department for Transport had been capitalised following their guidance and that the conditions of the grant were being met.</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b> The funding provided by DfT is being used to support the delivery of a capital investment project (the NWL) and this is in accordance with the conditions of the grant.</p>

<b>Agenda item 7 Local Member Questions</b>	
Written supplementary question from Dan Roper	<p>What analysis has been completed regarding the reasons for higher levels of Covid deaths in Norfolk Care Homes (compared to regional and national average) since the start of the year and what conclusions have been reached?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b> Thank you for your question. As I said in the answer to your original question care home deaths are declining across the country, region and county. However there has been a total of 383 care home deaths involving Covid-19 in Norfolk care homes from the period 1/1/2021-26/2/2021. This is lower than Essex (431), but higher than Suffolk (150) and Cambridgeshire (116).</p> <p>This is a very important issue and accordingly last month I agreed with the Director for Adult Social Services that he commission a further look at the issues surrounding deaths in care homes, which will consist of presentation to the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board, and further engagement with partners across our system to understand the experience of people and the factors affecting the position.</p>
Written supplementary question from Cllr Colleen Walker	<p>My question related to whether the Conservative administration had delivered on your promise to Norfolk to help get first time buyers onto the property ladder. Is he is trying to blame Labour for his failure to deliver his own manifesto promise?</p> <p><b>Response by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services &amp; Asset Management:</b> The two responses very clearly sets out how, through the provision of private sale and shared ownership homes – the Conservative administration has delivered on its promise. I have also noted that through Repton we have overprovided the amount of affordable homes (including social rent), a fact with Labour continues to ignore.</p>

<p>Written supplementary question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p>	<p>Is the cabinet member making schools responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the devices that NCC has distributed to them and will he provide schools with additional funding to support this extra financial burden?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services:</b>  Many thanks Cllr. Rumsby for the supplementary question. The laptops have been provided free of charge to schools. All schools will have a support contract to maintain their equipment. NCC, through ICT solutions provide a range of support packages, which around 140 schools currently access; these devices would be covered under these packages. All devices have 1-year warranty; schools can contact ICT solutions to investigate any support needs.</p>
<p>Written supplementary question from Cllr Emma Corlett</p>	<p>The cabinet member should explain how the simple question whether the cost has gone up breaches commercial confidentiality. Isn't it in the public interest to know that without divulging details?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b>  As we are still in a procurement process, and matters related to that process are still to be finalised - so we are unable to share anything further at this stage. We have received formal bids from the shortlisted companies who are competing for the contract, however there is a need to spend more time reviewing the information provided to us as we complete the due diligence ahead of closing out the procurement process. It is necessary as we undertake this work that we ask all bidders to continue to respect confidentiality until the end of the process. To make any further information available on this matter would be inappropriate.</p>
<p>Written supplementary question from Cllr Danny Douglas</p>	<p>The cabinet member has not answered the question why there was a £25m overspend with prior approval of council. Will he tell Norfolk how that happened or not?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport</b>  The response to the original question refers to the Lessons Learnt report published on the county council's website. That report, in section 1, refers to the agreement by the council to proceed into the construction stage of the contract and also refers to the cost of the project, the reporting of this and the decision making by the council to increase the budget.</p>
<p>Written supplementary question from Cllr Brenda Jones</p>	<p>The cabinet member has stressed the grown up conversations with the government he has and expressed confidence he is being listened to. Now he is saying the is talking to them through third parties and they rarely respond. Which is it, but either way it doesn't seem to be having much impact?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Finance</b>  The original question specifically related to the Government Budget and the answer reflected this. The original response also provided extracts from detailed inputs made by the Council to recent Government decision-making processes. The answer was clear that Government does not as a matter of course respond directly to any submissions made to consultation activity (which is normal practice and in fact is exactly the same as when the Council itself undertakes consultation activity).</p> <p>Outside of these formal consultation exercises, the Council regularly engages with MPs and Government at various levels and has constructive conversations about the issues we face. As the Member for Finance, I work closely with the local MP, briefing on a range of issues including those relating to finance. Other examples include conversations at officer level with MHCLG, most recently about the implications of COVID and wider financial pressures. There is also significant value in engaging with Government via representative</p>

	<p>groups including the Local Government Association, County Councils Network, and others, on issues of common concern and I make no apologies for this.</p> <p>We have clearly and regularly expressed our disappointment to Government about the continued delay to significant reforms of local government funding, but there is nonetheless clear evidence of Government responding to some of the concerns we have identified, whether in relation to the provision of emergency COVID funding, offering the scope to levy and increase the Adult Social Care precept, and the provision of social care grant funding. While we would always like to see more being done in these areas, it is not true to say that Government does not take account of Local Government's concerns.</p>
<p>Written supplementary question from Cllr David Collis</p>	<p>The question is about what have you done for the past four years. The answer appears to say nothing and that is the impression Norfolk has from the fact there was such flooding this winter. Did he break his election pledge and will he apologise?</p> <p><b>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Waste</b></p> <p>As explained in the previous response, the County Council has proactively worked with all agencies and landowners over the last four years, to drive forward the maintenance and improvement of drainage assets, which are owned and maintained by a variety of private individuals and public bodies.</p> <p>The major factor of the flooding that occurred this winter was that the groundwater and river levels were already high following three months of wet weather in the autumn. We then had 140% of the average rainfall, with the wettest December and January since 1915. This led to drainage systems becoming inundated with floodwater and watercourses overtopping.</p>